Story & Art by Takehiko Inoue

Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

vol. 3

English Edition

Vagabond Vol. 3
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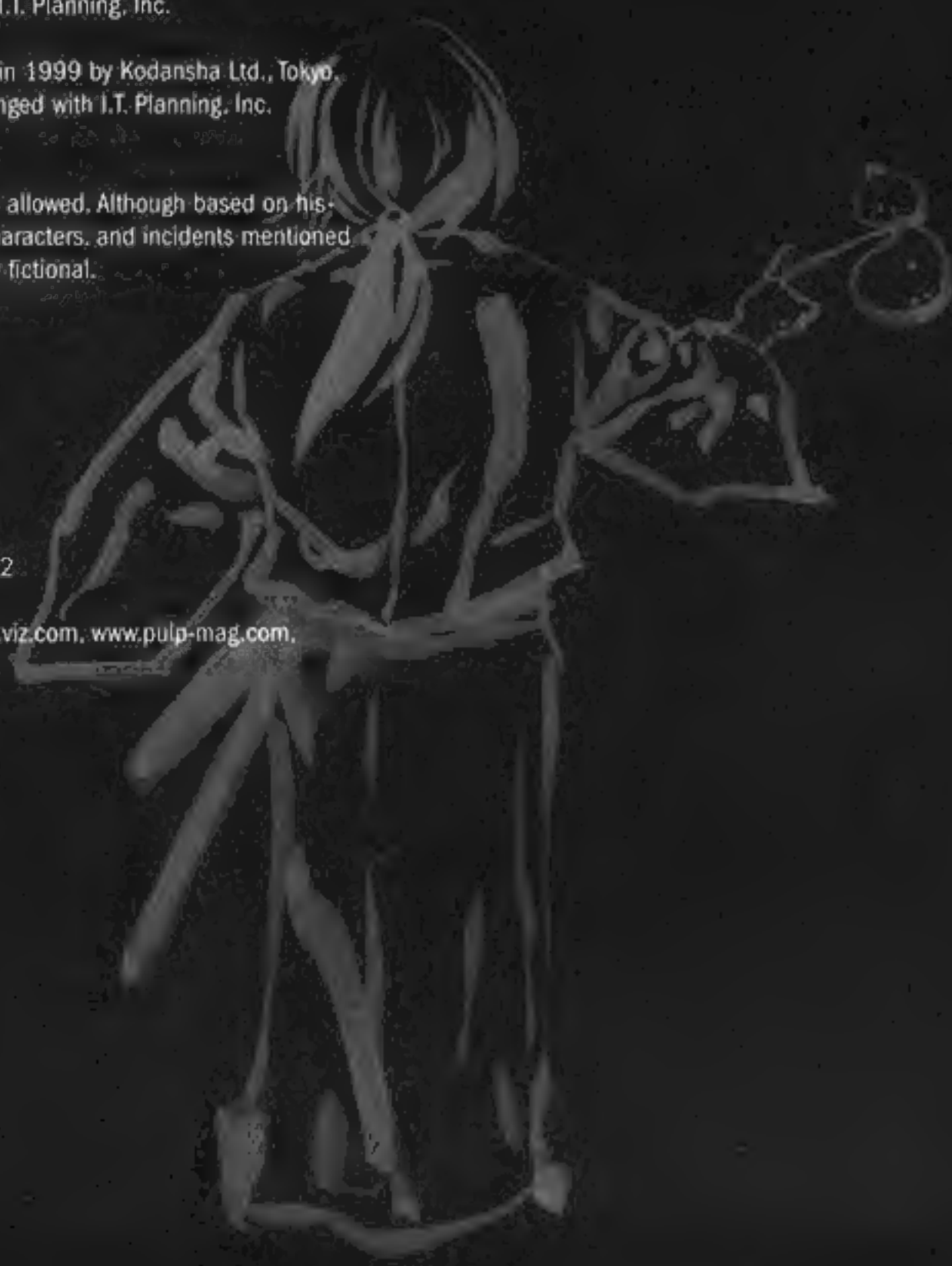

SHINMEN TAKEZŌ DIED HERE TODAY.

THAT'S WHAT I'LL TELL THE AUTHORITIES, TOO.

ESPECIALLY GRANNY HONIDEN.

THAT'S ALL THAT THE VILLAGERS OF MUSASHI NEED TO KNOW.

CARRY MIYAMOTO VILLAGE INSIDE YOURSELF, TAKEZO.

BUT NEVER FORGET WHERE YOU CAME FROM. THE PLACE YOU GREW UP.

FROM NOW ON--

KYOTO

YOU SHALL BE CALLED *MIYAMOTO MUSASHI.*

Vagabond

vol. 3

Story & Art by Takehiko Inoue

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#22 Miyamoto Musashi

IN THE SPRING OF HIS 21ST YEAR, SHINMEN TAKEZŌ HAS BEEN REBORN AS MIYAMOTO MUSASHI.

I'M EXCITED.

WHO'S THAT FILTHY KID...?

WHAT'S HE DOING WITH THAT WOODEN SWORD TUCKED UNDER HIS BELT?

HE LOOKS STUPID.

SO THIS IS KYOTO...

IS IT JUST ME? EVERYONE LOOKS SO SOPHISTICATED.

THEIR NAMES ARE EVEN KNOWN IN MIYAMOTO VILLAGE.

MMBL MMBL

THERE ARE MASTER SWORDSMEN HERE RENOWNED THROUGHOUT THE LAND.

NO USE POSTPONING THE INEVITABLE.

THE KYŌHACHI STYLE OF SWORDSMANSHIP...

THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL...

YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ.

WAIT!

STOP IT!

NO!

WAIT FOR ME!

PLEASE!

TUGG

GOTCHA!

OH, STOP!
HERE'S SOME FOR YOU, TOO!
TIKL TIKL TIKL TIKL

HA HA HA HA
TIKL TIKL TIKL TIKL
STOP IT!!

HE'S A SAMURAI, TOO?

NONE FOR ME!

HA HA HA
I GUESS THERE'S ALL KINDS IN KYOTO.

...

GASP!

I SEE THAT YOU'RE IN TRAINING.

HEADING FOR THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL?

I-I'M SO SORRY.

NO... IT'S OKAY.

YOU GIVE THEM THAT BLOODTHIRSTY LOOK AND THEY'LL CRUSH YOU.

I WOULDN'T GO THERE IF I WERE YOU.

DON'T DO ANYTHING RASH.

YOU'LL DIE.

BUT I *DON'T* PLAN ON JUST THROWING MY LIFE AWAY.

I'M PREPARED TO DIE.

YOU SEE. YOU'RE DEAD...

!!

SMIRK

I'M TERRIBLY SORRY!

HE'S DRUNK.

OH, MY!

LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

THUMP-THMP

THUMP-THMP

THUMP-THMP

I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOU LADIES.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

HMM ...?

YOU WENT TOO FAR!

I WAS SO SCARED!

THAT WASN'T FUNNY!

HE REALLY SEEMS TO HAVE TAKEN TO HER LATELY...

WHAT'S SO GOOD ABOUT HER?

TO SEE THAT GIRL AGAIN?

AKEMI!

I'M COMING!

...IN SAKUSHU.

MIYAMOTO VILLAGE...

AND YOU PLAN ON CHALLENGING THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL?

SO...

GLIP GLIP

...WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

EVERYONE KNOWS THAT.

NO ONE TAKES ON THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL WITHOUT GETTING SERIOUSLY INJURED.

THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL HAS *THE* MOST SKILLED SWORDSMEN AROUND.

YOU'RE BEING VERY FOOLISH.

IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE SOMEONE AS FOOLISH AS YOU HAS COME AROUND.

AND TO BE ARMED WITH JUST A WOODEN SWORD!

HOW'RE YOU GOING TO CHALLENGE THEM WITH *THAT!?*

IT'S RIDICULOUS!

TAKE MY ADVICE...

...DON'T DO IT.

I STILL PLAN ON BECOMING INVINCIBLE UNDER THE SUN.

ONLY NOW, I'LL REACH MY GOAL BY WAY OF THE SWORD.

I AM SHINMEN—

NO...

平安古惡者

YOSHIOKA KEMPO
MILITARY INSTRUCTOR
TO THE FORMER
SHOGUNATE

...HERE TO CHALLENGE YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ.

MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...

HUH?

WHAT WAS THAT, YOU COUNTRY HICK?

HMPH!

Vagabond

じーちゃん
を かくのは
好き
(I LIKE DRAW-
ING OLD MEN.)
(COUGH COUGH.)

MIYAMOTO MUSASHI?

OF COURSE NOT.

NEVER HEARD OF HIM.

BUT WAIT! LISTEN TO WHAT THIS FOOL HAD TO SAY...

TURN HIM AWAY.

HIS HAIR IS A MESS. IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S EXPLODING.

HIS CLOTHES ARE SO DIRTY YOU CAN'T TELL WHAT COLOR THEY ARE.

AND ALL HE'S ARMED WITH IS A WOODEN SWORD.

HE'S JUST SOME COUNTRY BUMPKIN WHO FANCIES HIMSELF A SWORDSMAN.

COMES LURCHING INTO THE SCHOOL LIKE A COW...

IS HE OUT OF HIS MIND?!

WHAT...!?

...

WHERE IS THE YOUNG MASTER?

I BELIEVE HE'S GONE TO THE PLEASURE QUARTERS.

...WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO THE REPUTATION OF THIS SCHOOL?

WITH SUCH A MASTER...

I SEEK TO CHALLENGE YOSHIOKA SEIJÜRO.

#23 First Step

I AM
UEDA
RYOHEI.

BEFORE
YOU CAN
SEE MASTER
SEIJURO YOU
MUST FIRST
FACE HIS
DISCIPLES.

YOU
MUST PROVE
YOURSELF IF
YOU WANT TO
CHALLENGE
THE MASTER.

HE DOES
NOT HAVE
TIME TO
WASTE ON
THOSE WHO
ARE NOT
WORTHY

...I AM
A RONIN
FROM
SARUSHIMA.

MY
NAME IS
MIYAMOTO
MUSASHI

BY THE WAY...

MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...

IF YOU PROVE TO BE FORMIDABLE, THEN I, AS ONE OF THE SENIOR DISCIPLES, WILL TAKE YOU ON.

...

DO YOU HAVE SOMEONE WHO WILL COME TO CLAIM YOUR DEAD BODY?

...!!

HUH?

WAIT. I HAVE A QUESTION.

I GET TO FACE YOSHIOKA SEIJURŌ *AFTER* I DEFEAT YOU...

IS THAT RIGHT?

!!

YOU HAVE SUCH CONFIDENCE!!

MIYAMOTO MUSASHI!!

IF I DIE...

...YOU CAN DO WHATEVER YOU WANT WITH MY BODY...JUST TOSS IT IN THE RIVER OR SOMETHING.

IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER.

DON'T HOLD BACK ON HIM.

HEY.

YES, SIR.

CAN I PUT MY HAND IN?

AKEMI

NO...

HE SAYS THESE THINGS ALL THE TIME...

AKEMI.

LET'S ESCAPE FROM KYOTO TOGETHER.

BUT HE NEVER ACTUALLY DOES ANY-THING.

HE'S NOT SUCH A BAD GUY...

YOU ARE THE RENOWNED YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ. HOW COULD YOU SAY SUCH A THING...

HE COMES TO HAVE THE SAME CONVERSATION EVERY TIME.

TŌJI!

HE'S NOT SUCH A BAD GUY...

TOJI! YOU'RE HERE WITH THE YOUNG MASTER?

YOU SHOULD COME IN.

OKO.

I DON'T FEEL COMFORTABLE IN THESE TYPES OF PLACES.

YOU'LL ATTRACT TOO MUCH ATTENTION OUT THERE. COME ON IN!

COME ON, TOJI...

TOJI!

FWOOSH

KYAA!

YOU OLD HAG!

WHAT'RE YOU PURRING ABOUT?

HMPH!

GION TŌJI, ONE OF THE SENIOR DISCIPLES OF THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL, EH?

KRRK

...

OH MY!

AH...

UH...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?

YOU COME HERE!!

CAN'T YOU SEE I'M WORKING!?

SLUMP

...

HOW DARE YOU MAKE A FOOL OF YOUR HUSBAND!?

QUIT THIS DAMN JOB!

EVER SINCE YOU WERE SEVENTEEN AND WE FOUND YOU AT THE BATTLE OF SEKIGAHARA...

...YOU'VE BEEN LIVING OFF THE MONEY AKEMI AND I MAKE.

RIGHT?

YOU DON'T EVEN ACT LIKE A MAN!

WHO'S PUTTING FOOD ON THE TABLE?

YOU'RE JUST A DRUNK!

ACK!

TUMP

YOU'RE PITIFUL!

ARE YOU JEALOUS?

I'M SURE *YOU'LL* BE FINE WITH WORKING ALL DAY FOR HARDLY ANY PAY.

WELL, YOU'RE JUST A HICK FROM SAKUSHU.

I WON'T STOP YOU. GO AHEAD AND LEAVE US. SEE IF I CARE.

I'LL CARRY STONES FOR CASTLE CONSTRUCTION OR DO ANYTHING TO MAKE A LIVING...

I TOLD YOU I'D WORK!!

BUT YOU'RE SO SPOILED, ALL YOU DO IS COMPLAIN ABOUT HOW TERRIBLE THE FOOD WOULD BE...

...OR HOW YOU CAN'T LIVE IN SOME SHACK...

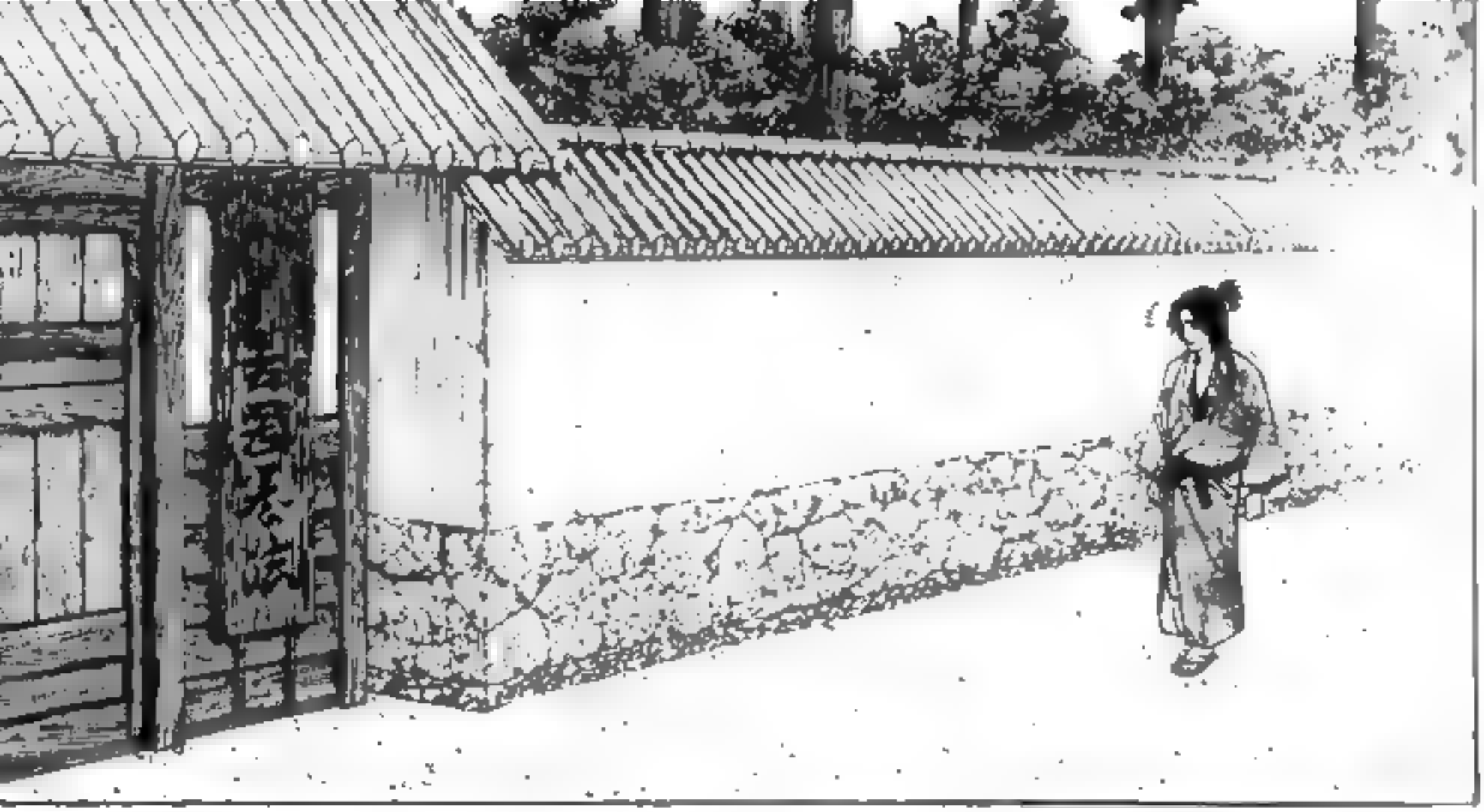
I'M JUST ROTTING INSIDE!

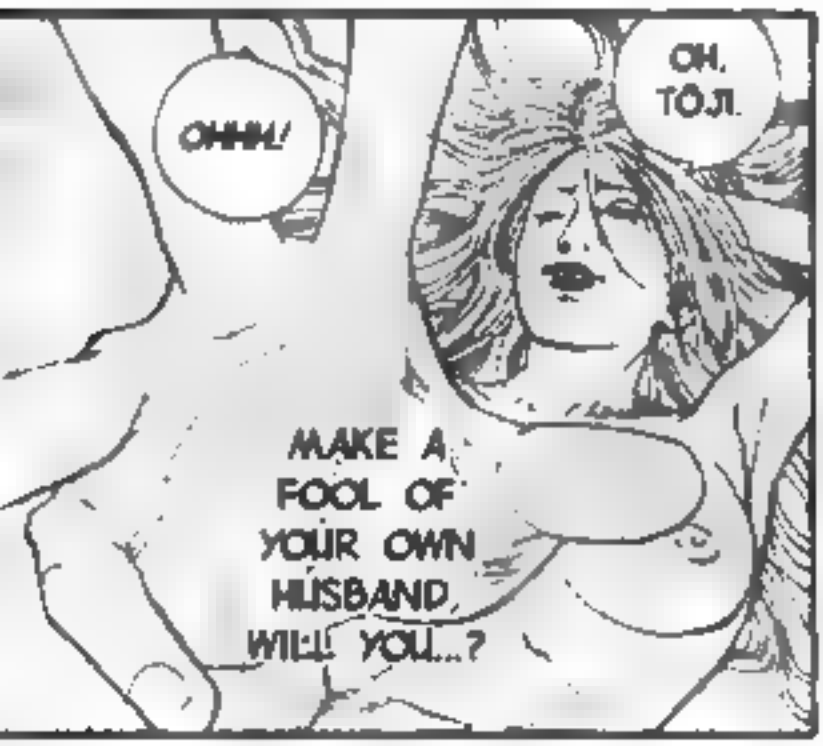
DAMN DAMN DAMN!!

IF I'D RETURNED TO MIYAMOTO VILLAGE BACK THEN...

DAMN IT!!

IF I'D ONLY GONE BACK TO MIYAMOTO VILLAGE ''




OHHH!
OH, TOJI.
MAKE A FOOL OF YOUR OWN HUSBAND, WILL YOU...?

HMPH!

THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL...!

HMPH!
I'LL BURN THIS PLACE DOWN!!

ARRGH!

FWAAAA

!!

WHAT WAS THAT...!?

...

GASP!

GULP.

THUNK

ARGH

WHAMM

URGH

WHAT'S GOING ON!?

WHAT!?

MIYAMOTO
MUSASHI...

Vagabond

(I WANT TO GO HOME...)

HEY!

HEY!

...

HNGH...

URR...

HUF

HUF

HUF

#24 The Challenge

I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOU!!

YAHHH!!

HEY!

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

...

THWAK

...

...

TWITCH

TWITCH

GASP!

THAT'S IT, CHIHARA!!

GET HIM!!

YAHH!

YAHH!

YAHH!

YAHH!

YAHH!

YAHH!

YAHH!

WHAT'S THE MATTER, MIYAMOTO!?

YOU! SCARED!?

WHAT IS THIS...?

WHAT KIND OF TRAINING ■ THIS?

WE'RE USING WOODEN PRACTICE SWORDS BUT THEY CAN STILL KILL.

ISN'T THIS SUP-POSED TO BE SERIOUS ?

THIS IS LIFE OR DEATH.

HE'S SO SLOW.

THIS IS *TOO* EASY...

HE'S *COM-PLETELY* VULNER-ABLE...

WHOOK

ARGH!!

WHUD

CHIHARA!!

!!

!!

HE'S DEAD.

FORGIVE US, MIYAMOTO MUSASHI.

IT IS THE DUTY OF A SAMURAI...

...TO FIGHT WITH THE ENTIRETY OF HIS HEART AND SOUL.

...

...

HE WAS CARELESS AND LET HIS GUARD DOWN.

HE UNDER-ESTIMATED YOU. HIS OWN ARROGANCE KILLED HIM.

EVEN AT THE RISK OF LOSING HIS OWN LIFE.

YES, I AGREE.

TAKA-SHINA...

HE'S NOT HOLDING BACK...

YEAH...

...

FSH

THP

THP...

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S COME TO THIS.

YEAH...

TAKASHINA'S TAKING ON THAT DIRTY HICK.

...

THP...

THP...

CAN WE GET STARTED...?

UMM...

WHAT!?

!?

THOK

TAKA-SHINA!!

ARRGH!

SOMEONE'S CHALLENGING THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL!

AND JUDGING FROM ALL THE COMMOTION ...

...HE'S TAKEN DOWN AT LEAST FIVE OF THEM!!

THERE'S NO MISTAKE!

IT'S REALLY HAPPENING!!

YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ, THE CURRENT HEAD OF THE SCHOOL, IS A LOSER WHO WASTES HIS TIME IN THE PLEASURE QUARTERS WITH OUR AKEMI.

HAH! THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL IS PAST ITS PRIME! IT'S JUST LIVING OFF OF THE REPUTATION OF YOSHIOKA KEMPŌ, THE SCHOOL'S FOUNDER!!

I HOPE YOU WILL BE THE RUIN OF THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL.

HA HA!

I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, BUT YOU MUST BE QUITE A SAMURAI. I THANK YOU.

SHUF

OH, TŌJI...

AND THAT SENIOR DISCIPLE, GION TŌJI. ALWAYS COMING TO SEE OKŌ...

GAHN!!

YOU THERE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
HUH?

!?

GASP!

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING AWAY?

WH- WHO'RE YOU?

LIR

WHUD

ARGH!

KINCH

...DENSHICHIRO.

YOSHIOKA

YOSHIOKA

DENSHICHIRO!?

!!

YOU HAVE SOME BUSINESS WITH THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL?

UM...

HOW BAD CAN MY LUCK GET!?

SEIJŪRŌ'S YOUNGER BROTHER!!

THIS IS *ONE* PERSON I *NEVER* WANTED TO MEET...

HE'S THE YOUNGER BROTHER, BUT PEOPLE SAY HE'S MORE SUITED TO BE THE HEAD OF THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL.

UNLIKE HIS PLAYBOY BROTHER, DENSHICHIRŌ IS COMPLETELY DEDICATED TO HIS SWORDSMANSHIP.

MY BROTHER?

WHEN I HEARD SOME STRANGE CRIES FROM THE DOJO...

...I THOUGHT THIS MIGHT BE AN EMERGENCY.

I-I WAS JUST WALKING BY...

...SO I THOUGHT I SHOULD INFORM MASTER SEIJŪRŌ.

MY NAME IS MATAHACHI.

I'M THE HOST OF THE YOMOGI INN...

SO YOU'RE...

?

HE IS A GUEST AT MY PLACE.

WHY AM I SUCH A SNIVELING --?

FIP FIP

WE HAVE THE HONOR OF BEING PATRONIZED BY THE YOUNG MASTER.

NNGH!

KRAK

WHUD

HOW CAN THAT HEDONIST...

...BE THE HEAD OF OUR SCHOOL?

ARGH!

KRAK

YAHH!

...!!

YOU...

...BASTARD!

UEDA...

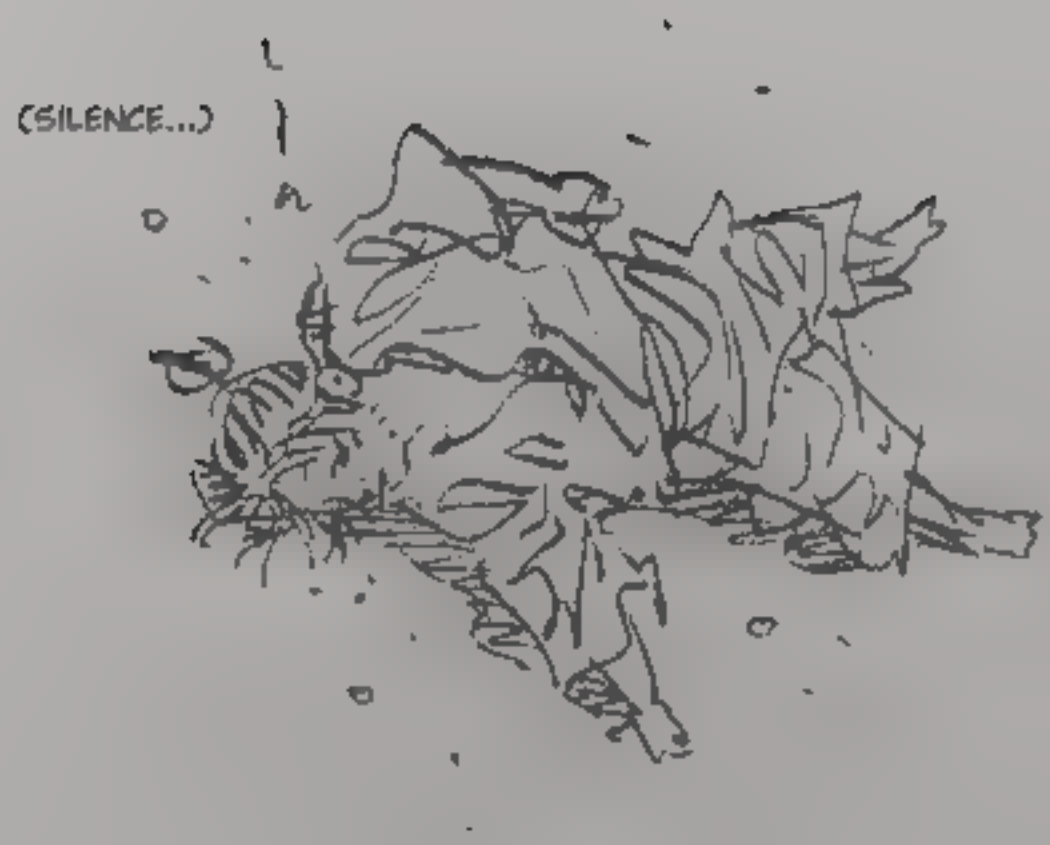
I'M STRONG.

I'M STRONG ...

...TO TAKE ON THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL!!

I'M STRONG ENOUGH...

Vagabond


(SILENCE...)

I CAN BEAT THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL!!!

...

URRGH...

ARGH...

I CAN TAKE THESE GUYS ON...

...

I CAN DO THIS!!

MY SKILL CAN COMPETE WITH THE BEST SWORDSMEN IN THE LAND!

#25 Chaos at the Yoshioka School

...WHO HAVE YOU STUDIED UNDER?

„MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...

FINALLY. ONE OF THE LEADERS!!

UEDA RYOHEI...

I GUESS THAT YOU COULD SAY THAT MY FATHER, SHINMEN MUNISAI, WHIPPED ME INTO SHAPE.

...IN PARTICULAR.

NO ONE...

SHINMEN MUNISAI?

HUH?

OTHER THAN MY FATHER...

...THE MOUNTAINS AND EVERYTHING IN THEM HAVE BEEN MY ONLY OTHER TEACHERS...

SHALL WE BEGIN?

ALL RIGHT THEN.

LIEDA SHOULDN'T WASTE HIS TIME!

WHAT!?

THAT GUY HASN'T EVEN MASTERED ANY STYLE.

LET'S GET STARTED...

YES...

COUNTRY HICK!

WHAT IS HE, A MONKEY?!

THE MOUNTAIN HIS MASTER?

HIS POSITION DOESN'T RESEMBLE ANY OF THE STYLES.

HIS STANCE HAS NO SET FORM...

...

HE WAS A DISCIPLE OF THE FOUNDER.

YEAH.

UEDA RYŌHEI...

HE'S JUST AS SKILLED AS SEIJŪRŌ AND DENSHICHIRO.

A PRODIGY.

SHINMEN MUNISAI!!

BACK THEN, IT WAS EVEN RUMORED THAT UEDA MIGHT BECOME HEAD OF THIS SCHOOL.

THIS MIYAMOTO MUSASHI JUST MIGHT CAUSE THIS SCHOOL A BIT OF TROUBLE...

MASTER KEMPO...

SO THE SON OF SHINMEN MUNISAI HAS COME TO CHALLENGE THE YOSHIKA SCHOOL.

FWOOSH

AT THE VERY LEAST PERHAPS I SHOULD INJURE ONE OF HIS ARMS.

THOK

TUGG

!!

WHAT STRENGTH!!

A DIRECT HIT WITH A BLOW LIKE THAT COULD EASILY CRUSH A MAN'S SKULL

AMAZING STRENGTH COMBINED WITH MAGNIFICENT SWORD MOVEMENT!!

...

GASP!

HOW ARE YOU RANKED AS A FIGHTER HERE IN KYOTO?

I WANT TO KNOW...

...PLEASE

!?

...

WHAT NUMBER ARE YOU?

UEDA...

NUMBER?

I CAME TO KYOTO...

I'M JUST A COUNTRY HICK.

...BECAUSE THE MOST SKILLED FIGHTERS ARE HERE. I PLAN ON DEFEATING THE BEST OF THE BEST-- THE STRONGEST MAN ■ KYOTO.

WHY DO YOU ASK?

WHAT A FOOL...

THIS GUY'S AN IDIOT...

I'M ASKING BECAUSE ...

AFTER I DEFEAT YOU! I WANT TO KNOW HOW CLOSE I AM...

OF COURSE HE IS!!

YOU'RE FINISHED !!

YOU'RE A NOBODY!

I GET THE FEELING...

...THAT YOU'RE PRETTY STRONG.

...TO BECOMING INVINCIBLE UNDER THE SUN.

SOMEONE HAS THE NERVE TO BARGE INTO OUR SCHOOL...

...AND TALK BIG ABOUT BEING INVINCIBLE ...?

ALL BECAUSE MY BROTHER CAVORTS AROUND AND MAKES A FOOL OF HIMSELF!!

THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL'S REPUTATION IS IN DECLINE...

UEDA, THAT'S ENOUGH.

THUD

THUD

YOU'RE TOO SOFT. YOU WERE PROBABLY THINKING IT WOULD BE ENOUGH TO CRUSH HIS ARM.

BUT A BROKEN ARM WON'T STOP THIS GUY FROM TALKING.

SENSEI...

...

I WON'T ALLOW HIM TO TARNISH THE REPUTATION OF THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL.

...

I'LL KILL HIM, MYSELF.

HE'S SO STUPID!!

HAH!

IGNORANT MONKEY.

...

MIYAMOTO MUSASHI, RONIN FROM SAKUSHU...

...REQUESTS TO ENGAGE YOU IN A DUEL.

YOU MUST BE...

...YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ, THE HEAD OF THIS SCHOOL.

!?

LEARN SOME MANNERS!

GO BACK TO THE MOUNTAINS!!

WHAT!?

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE!?

MIYAMOTO...

I... AM THE HEAD OF THIS SCHOOL.

!?

DENSHICHIRO

I AM YOSHIOKA

HMPH

I AM THE MASTER...

...OF THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL.

DENSHI-CHIRŌ SENSEI...

I'LL TAKE ON YOUR CHALLENGE.

SOMEONE GIVE HIM A SWORD.

...

I CAN GET OUT OF MY WAY, UEDA.

YOU CAN'T.

IN THE LONG RUN, *YOU* WILL PROVE TO BE THE ONE THAT THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL WILL DEPEND ON.

...!!

YOU *ARE* THE MASTER, DENSHICHIRŌ.

DENSHI CHIEF?

UEDA...

IF YOU WANT HIM DEAD, I'LL KILL HIM.

AND AS THE MASTER OF THE SCHOOL...

...YOU MUST BE SELECTIVE ■■ WHO YOU FIGHT.

WHAT ARE YOU SPOUTIN' OFF ABOUT?

UEDA...

!!

GION...

SINCE WHEN DOES THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL HAVE TWO MASTERS?

YAWWN..

I'M BACK.

FWOM

SEIJÛRO!!

...

IT'S YOU!!

HUH?

Vagabond

(I ALWAYS ALMOST FORGET
TO DRAW IN THE FRECKLES.)

HEY...

YOU'RE...

#26 The Master

YOU'RE...

...YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ!?

YOU'RE THE HEAD OF THIS SCHOOL!?

IF IT ISN'T THE SAMURAI IN TRAINING.

SO YOU CAME AFTER ALL...

EVEN AFTER I WARNED YOU NOT TO.

...YOU KNOW THIS GUY?

SEIJURO ...

THUMP THUMP

THUMP THUMP

YOU SEE, YOU'RE DEAD.

I MET HIM ON THE STREET TODAY.

U

THIS IS...

GRP

YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ!?

SHUT

SHUT

...!

IT'S ALL OVER...

GULP

BUT...

THEY WON'T LET HIM OUT OF THERE ALIVE.

THAT SAMURAI IN THERE HAS ALREADY DEFEATED FIVE OF THE DISCIPLES... SOME MIGHT EVEN BE DEAD.

HE'S DONE FOR!!

FIRST DENSHICHIRO CAME BACK, AND NOW SEIJŪRO AND TOJI HAVE RETURNED, TOO!!

...WHAT THE HELL AM I DOING HERE!?

I HAVE TO GET HOME!!

HUF HUF HUF HUF

I'LL BE KILLED IF THEY FIND ME!!

I'M NOT GOING BACK *THERE!!*

THERE'S *NO* WAY!!

...

BUT WHAT "HOME" DO I HAVE TO GO BACK TO?

SPECIAL SAKE FROM NADA

PLISH

IT'S *REALLY* GOOD.

TAKE IT AND GO HOME.

!

!!

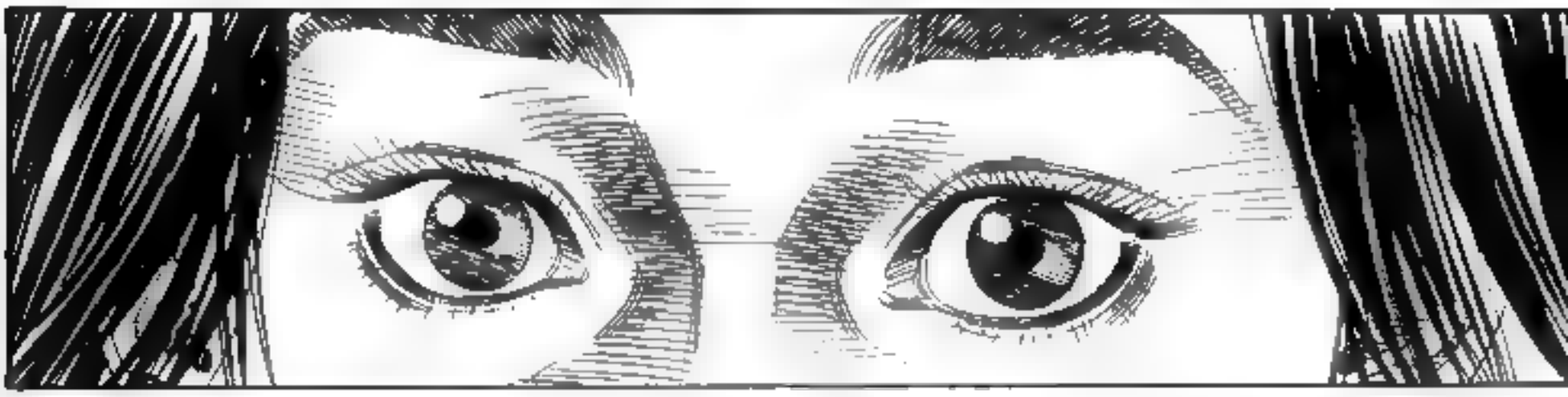
!!

SEIJŪRŌ!!

KRNCH!

I'M A HICK FROM THE COUNTRY...

I DON'T KNOW HOW TO APPRECIATE GOOD SAKE.



...WHEN THE RENOWNED YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ ■ RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME?

YOU EXPECT ME TO GO HOME WITH A CONSOLATION PRIZE...

FFUUPH

...

GASP!

ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND, MIYAMOTO ?

YOU'RE SHAKING.

WHO IS THIS GUY?

!

HA HA HA!!

LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE JUST ALL TALK!

...

TWITCH

TWITCH

TWITCH

CAN'T STOP SHAKING

BRR

BRR

MASTER SEIJŪRO.

I'M GOING TO FIGHT YOU! WITH EVERYTHING I HAVE. ARE *YOU* WILLING TO DO THE SAME?

WHOEVER YOU ARE IN THERE, I MUST GIVE YOU MY THANKS.

IT GIVES ME COURAGE.

YOU'RE TRYING TO TAKE ON THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL ALL BY YOURSELF...

I'M COMPLETELY MOVED.

I WENT OFF TO SEKIGAHARA WITH A SINGLE SPEAR IN HAND. I HAD GREAT HOPES AND DREAMS.

THANK YOU.

YOU'VE HELPED ME REMEMBER WHAT I USED TO BE LIKE.

I *WILL* MAKE A NAME FOR *MYSELF!!*

I *CAN* BECOME STRONGER.

IT'S *NOT* TOO LATE FOR ME.

...

WHOEVER YOU ARE IN THERE...

CAN'T SEE IN THERE...

THEY HAVEN'T KILLED YOU YET, HAVE THEY?

I-I'M NO GOOD...

I RAN OFF AND ABANDONED MY BEST FRIEND...

I DIDN'T HAVE A SWORD SO...

...SO I...

I JUST FROZE...

AND I...

HE WENT IN ALL ALONE TO FIGHT SEVERAL DOZENS OF BANDITS.

JUST LIKE YOU'RE DOING RIGHT NOW.

I LOST MY HEAD

I HAVE TO...

...RISE ABOVE MYSELF!!

...

I LET MY FRIEND DIE AND I SURVIVED...

AND NOW, I HAVE SUCH AN EMPTY LIFE.

I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE ...!!

THOK

HOW DARE YOU!?

FWOOSH

AH, WHAT A WASTE. SUCH GOOD SAKE.

SOME-ONE CLEAN THIS MESS UP.

DENSHI CHIRO, STOP...

HEY!!

KICK

THE HEAD OF THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL MUSTN'T BE SO SOFT!!

THAT'S THE YOSHIOKA WAY.

I'LL FINISH THIS MOUNTAIN MONKEY OFF IN A SINGLE BLOW!! THERE'LL BE NOTHING LEFT OF HIM.

DON'T LET HIM PROVOKE YOU!

YOU'RE NOT CLAIMING THAT YOU'RE STRONGER THAN THE MASTER OF THE SCHOOL, ARE YOU?

!!

!!

SO THE "FAKE" MASTER WANTS TO TAKE ME ON?

YOU TRICKED ME

TUP

TUP

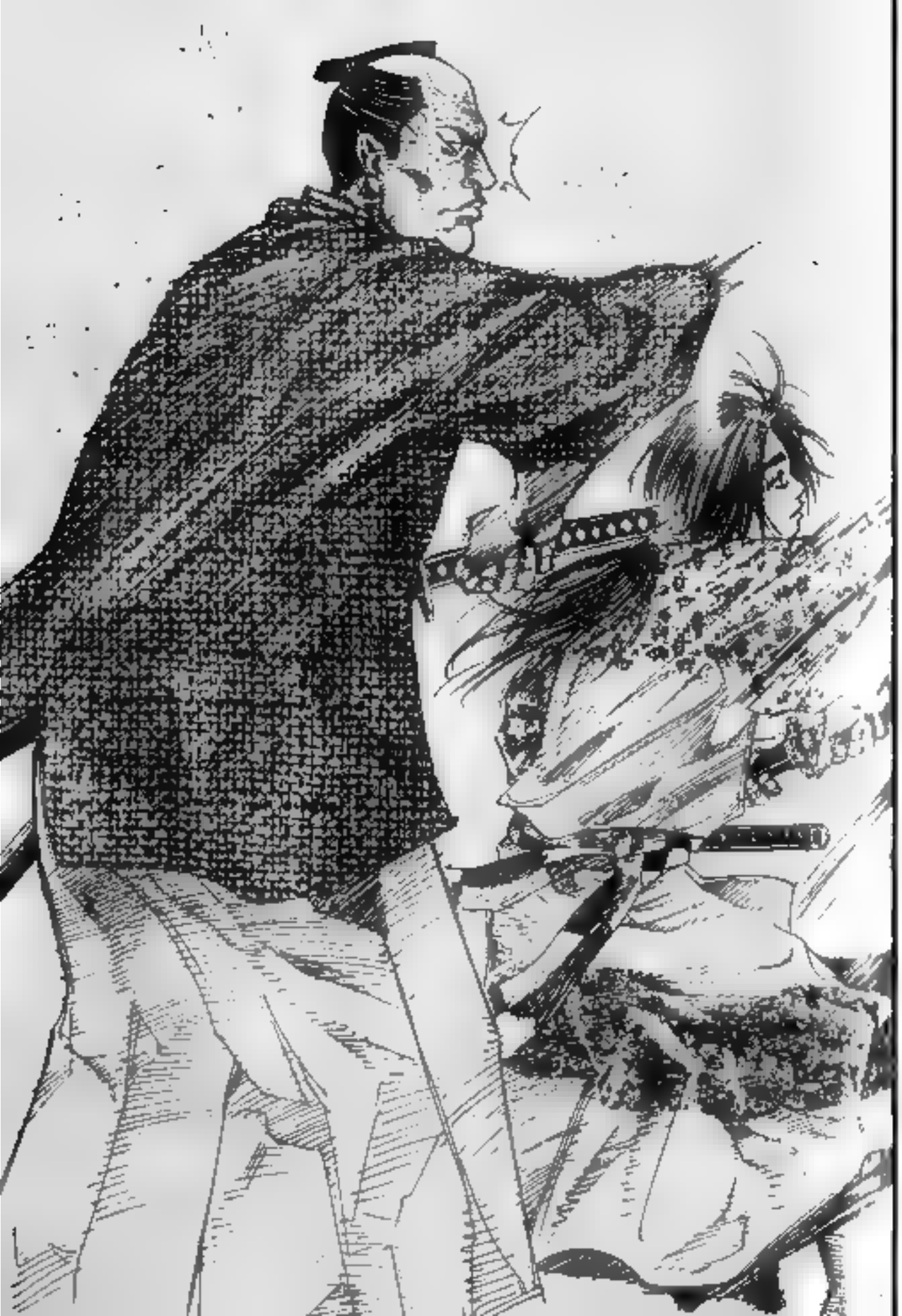
...

THIS MIYAMOTO MUSASHI IS A DEAD MAN.

DENSHICHIRO'S ALL RILED UP.

I'LL SPLIT YOUR HEAD RIGHT HERE.

DIE!!



SLASH

Vagabond

(I HAVEN'T HAD MUCH EXPERIENCE DRAWING BARE FEET UNTIL NOW...)

PLISH

PLISH

#27 Instinct

WHAT A QUICK DRAW.

SO THIS IS YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ!!

HIS ARM REACHED OUT LIKE A GIANT SNAKE!!

WHEN A BEAST ENCOUNTERS AN ENEMY, IT LOOKS FEROCIOUS ...

...AND LETS OUT AN ANGRY ROAR.

DO YOU KNOW WHY?

...

THE ENEMY MIGHT RETREAT...

...AND THAT WAY THE BEAST CAN AVOID A FIGHT.

...IS TO AVOID A FIGHT.

THE FIRST INSTINCT...

THANK YOU, SEIJŪRŌ...

TH-

...

HMPH...

...FOR DEMONSTRATING YOUR SKILL TO SOMEONE LIKE ME.

...

YOU SEE HOW RECKLESS YOU ARE. NOW GET OUT OF HERE.

THAT IS, IF *THEY* LET YOU OUT OF HERE ALIVE.

THE WAY OF THE SWORD IS STEEP. I STILL HAVE SO FAR TO CLIMB.

BUT THAT MAKES MY GOAL ALL THE MORE WORTHWHILE.

I STILL REQUEST TO CHALLENGE YOU IN A BOUT.

AND THAT'S WHY I *MUST* FACE YOSHIOKA SEIJURO!!

HUF

HUF

!!

...

SOMETIMES PERSISTENCE WILL GET YOU NO-WHERE.

MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...

WHAT A FOOL!

IDIOT!

HIS FOREHEAD'S GUSHING WITH BLOOD AND IT JUST FUELS HIS BLOODLUST...

INTERESTING FELLOW.

HAHA!

I CAN'T DO THAT.

DIDN'T YOU?

YOU ASKED ME IF I WAS WILLING TO TAKE YOU ON WITH EVERYTHING I HAVE...

WHAT?

KRNCH!

I'M NOT INTERESTED IN FIGHTING YOU...

KRNCH!

WHAT'S THIS NONSENSE ...!?

I ACCEPT MY DUTY AS HIS OLDEST SON. BUT...

...I CAN'T CHANGE MY PERSONALITY.

I HAVE TO FOLLOW MY INSTINCTS.

吉岡家兵法

YOSHIOKA KEMPO, THE MILITARY INSTRUCTOR TO THE SHOGUNATE FAMILY.

AND SO...

...I AM GOING OUT AGAIN...

...TO THE PLEASURE QUARTERS.

FAREWELL !!

!!

!?

WHAT !?

SHU

...

HE GOT AWAY...!!

WATCH THAT SELF-CONCEIT, GION!!

SO I'LL GO WITH HIM.

THERE IS ONLY ONE MAN STRONGER THAN ME...

OH WELL...

BUT...

HMPH...

MIYAMOTO MUSASHI, HUH?

YOU'RE AN INTER-ESTING FELLOW.

GION TŌJI...

WHAT AN ARROGANT GUY...

IF YOU MANAGE TO GET OUT OF HERE ALIVE...

I, GION TŌJI, WILL TAKE YOU ON.

FP

FP

BUT IT LOOKS LIKE THE ODDS ARE AGAINST YOU.

HELL, HE COULD HAVE BEEN WORSE OFF!!

TWO OF THE STRONGEST IN THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL HAVE LEFT.

AS WELL AS ALL THE OTHER DISCIPLES.

UEDA RYÔHEI.

THE MIGHTY YOSHIOKA DENSHICHIRÔ AND...

BUT THERE ARE TWO LEFT...!!

IF I'M GOING TO HELP HIM I HAVE TO DO IT *NOW!!*

GULP!

AND, I CAN'T SEE IN THERE TOO WELL. BUT...

...HIS FACE SEEMS TO BE COVERED WITH BLOOD.

FWIK

FWIK

WHICH WAY TO THE PLEASURE QUARTERS?

!!

YOU LOST!!

ARE YOU A FOOL!?

YOU'RE DRENCHED IN BLOOD!!

DON'T YOU GET IT!?

YOU'RE GOING AFTER THEM!?

I STILL HAVEN'T SHOWN HIM *MY* SKILL.

I WANT TO EXCHANGE BLOWS WITH HIM.

HE'S THE STRONGEST SWORDSMAN IN KYOTO...

YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ...

THERE'S NO REASON FOR ME TO FIGHT ANYONE ELSE.

ZHOOP

TAKASHINA...

JUST PASSED AWAY...

THUP

DON'T YOU SEE...?

WE STILL WANT TO FIGHT *YOU!!*

ALL FIVE OF THEM...

...!!

...ARE DEAD.

...

...TO KILL YOU!!

AND WE HAVE FIVE VERY GOOD REASONS...

TRUMP

Vagabond

(FLICKER FLICKER.)

DENSHICHIRO
...

I WON'T BE SATISFIED UNTIL I KILL YOU FIVE TIMES OVER.

SO TAKASHINA IS DEAD...

WHO ELSE DIED?

CHIHARA ...

...AND NIMURA.

HASUZAWA ...

...AND KAJI.

...

I'M NOT LIKE MY BROTHER ...

I CAN'T JUST LAUGH IT OFF AFTER FIVE OF MY MEN HAVE BEEN KILLED.

#28 Demon II

FWIP

MASTER!!

SENSEI!!

DENSHICHIRO SENSEI!!

SO I HAVE TO FIGHT *YOU* TO GET OUT OF HERE?

THAT'S RIGHT.

SOMEBODY GIVE HIM A SWORD.

—

GASP!

HE'S IN TROUBLE.

BUT WHAT CAN I DO!?

...

THAT SAMURAI MIGHT BE STRONG, BUT YOU'D HAVE TO BE CRAZY TO CHALLENGE DENSHICHIRO!

I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING BEFORE HE GETS KILLED.

I HAVE TO ACT NOW!!

...

HUF

HUF

HUF

FWISH!

U.P!

TWITCH

TWITCH

SOMEONE GIVE HIM A SWORD!!

HE JUST--

WE DON'T BELIEVE HE DESERVES THE FORMALITIES OF AN OFFICIAL CHALLENGE...

DENSHICHIRO SENSEI!

HE JUST DESERVES TO DIE!!

THAT'S FINE WITH ME.

TUGG

-

HAHA_

I'M
READY.

HUH!?

...!?

WHAT DOES HE THINK HE CAN DO WITH THAT BROKEN PRACTICE SWORD!?

ARROGANT BASTARD!

WHO DOES HE THINK HE IS!?

OKAY...

THUMP THUMP

HERE I GO!!

...

WHAT CAN YOU DO...

IS THIS SOME KIND OF BLUFF?

...WITH THOSE PIECES OF WOOD?

THUMP
THMP

THUMP
THMP

THUMP
THMP

NOW'S
YOUR CHANCE!!
GET OUT
OF HERE!

THUMP
THMP

THAT'S
WHAT
I'LL DO!

THUMP
THMP

OKAY!!

TWO!!

ONE!!

THUMP THUMP

THUMP THMP

I'M GOING!!

HERE I GO!!

I'M GOING TO REDEEM MYSELF!!

HUH!?

/

THWUNK

!!

KLAK

!!

SENSEI!!

DENSHICHIRO SENSEI!!

—

VERY CLEVER.

THAT WAS CLEVER.

AHH.

HMPH.

FWOM

FWOM

NO BROKEN BONES.

TUGG

I GUESS THIS IS TOO SHORT TO DO ANY REAL DAMAGE.

KLOP

FIP

THE NEXT BLOW WILL BE YOUR DEATH

FINISH!

HE JUST MIGHT DEFEAT DENSHI-CHIRO...

THIS GUY MIGHT BE ABLE TO DO IT...

GASP!

MAYBE I SHOULDN'T GET IN THE WAY...

KLANK

..!!

DEMON...

GASP!

AMAZING!!

HE'S A *DEMON!!*

SLICH

CALLING ME A DEMON IS A COMPLIMENT...

...COMING TO KYOTO...

HUF

HUF

HUF

YOSHIOKA KEMPO!! YAGYU SEKISHUSAI!!

IT WAS BECAUSE OF THEIR *STRENGTH* THAT THEY DISTINGUISHED THEMSELVES.

...I'LL BECOME THE MIGHTIEST OF FIGHTERS.

IF I DEDICATE MYSELF TO THE WAY OF THE SWORD...

...I'VE FOUND MY WAY!

SENSEI!!

...!!

WHAT'S THAT SMILE?

WHAT MAKES YOU SO CONFIDENT, YOU ARROGANT LITTLE BASTARD?

Vagabond

(VISUALIZATION TRAINING.)

I'LL SAY IT ONE MORE TIME.

TAKE ONE OF OUR SWORDS.

I SEE.

I DON'T NEED IT.

FSH

FWOOSH

!!

MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...

YOU CAN ONLY BE SO CONFIDENT BECAUSE...

...YOU HAVE NEVER FACED A TRULY STRONG OPPONENT.

#29 | Ignorance

IT'S JUST HOPE WITH NO BASIS IN REALITY...

BLIND FAITH...

NAIVETY...

CALL IT WHAT YOU WILL...

!!

...WHILE YOU STILL CAN.

YOU MIGHT AS WELL KEEP TALKING...

FWOOSH

FWOOSH

!!

WHUD

ARRGH!

AGH!

FWOOSH!

THWUNK

GASP!

!!

WHAT SHOULD I DO!?

WHAT SHOULD I DO!?

THUMP

THUMP

DID THEY SEE ME!?

THUMP

THUMP

THUMP

GASP!!

ESCAPE!!

I DON'T EVEN KNOW THAT SAMURAI!

I'VE GOT NO CONNECTION TO HIM!!

WHY SHOULD I RISK MY LIFE!?

WHAT THE HELL AM I DOING...?

...

HUF

HUF

HUF

HUF

...

...

PASSION...

SOUL...

ANGER...

SUPPRESSED FEAR...

ALL OF YOUR EMOTIONS...

THEY'RE ALL REFLECTED IN YOUR SWORD.

URK

HOW THE HELL CAN THIS HULK DODGE MY SWORD?

...

THE TIP OF YOUR SWORD TREMBLES...

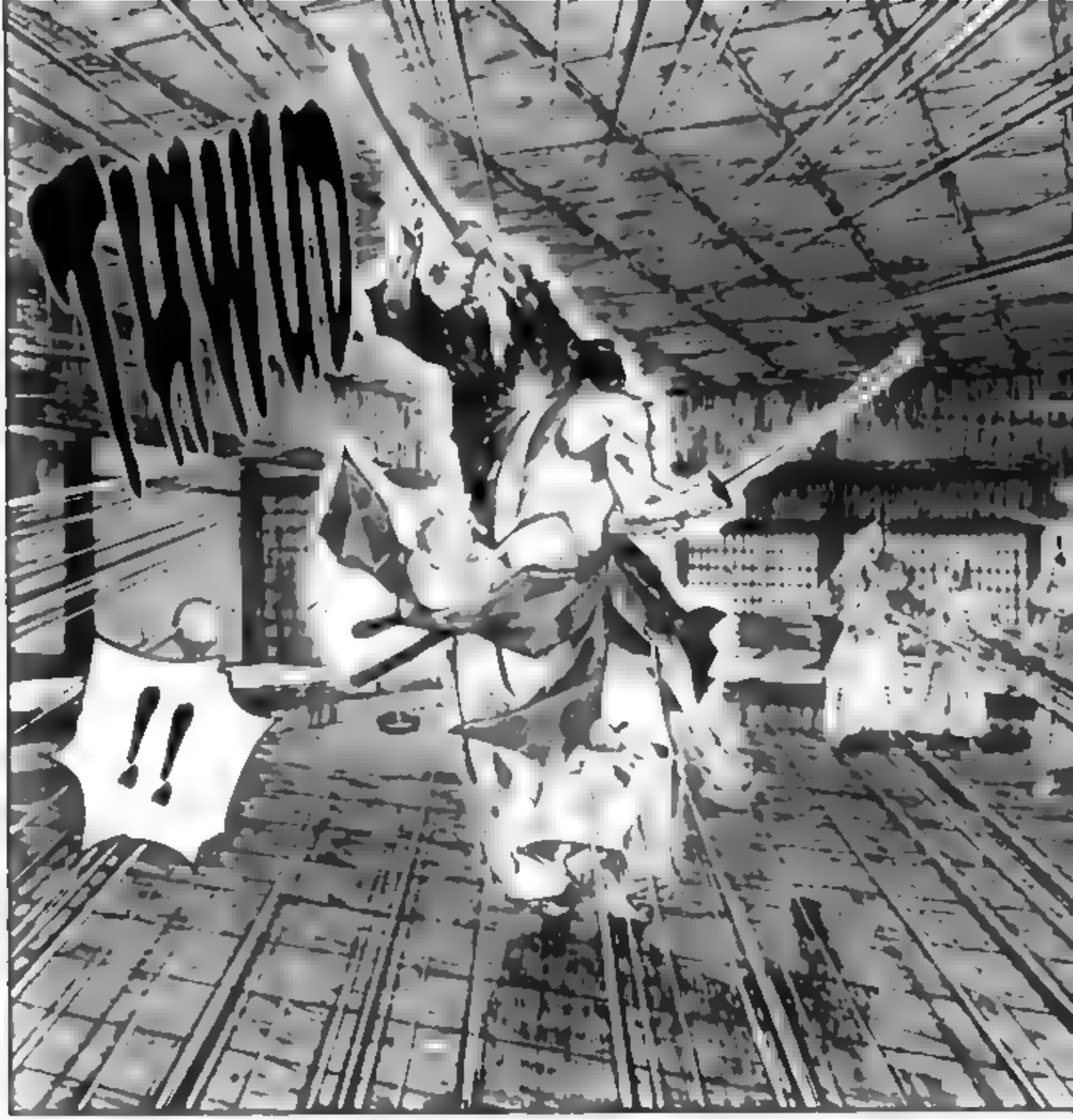
COULD THIS BE PANIC...?

...!!

!!

HE'S GOING TO ATTACK.

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE? YOU CONCEITED, SPOILED BASTARD!!


!!

SLURP.

DELICIOUS!!

THIS IS *GREAT* SAKE!

SLURP

SLURP

YES!!

GASP!

!!

FWUD

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING... YOU'RE WONDERING...

...HOW A SLOW HULK LIKE ME CAN DODGE YOUR SWORD...

I'LL TELL YOU HOW...

...

FLIP

I WAS ONCE A CHILD, TOO.

EVER SINCE I CAN REMEMBER...

...I'VE HAD TO TAKE ON THE SWORD OF YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ.

MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...

I CAN SEE RIGHT THROUGH YOUR SWORD...
FSH

SLISH

Vagabond

(SEIJURO!)

#30 A Single Stroke

GLUG GLUG

I'M TAKING ON THE YOSHIOKA, TOO!

I'M GONNA DRINK UP ALL THEIR SAKE!!

AHH!

DELICIOUS!

GLUG

GLUG

SLURP

SLURP

AHEM.

URRP!

EXCELLENT!

OH YEAHH!

I'M GONNA DRINK UP ALL THEIR SAKE!

THE YOSHIOKA WILL BE SO DIS-APPOINTED...

HA HA HA!

EXCELLENT SAKE!

...

FSSH

PHEW...

FWOM

THAT SAMURAI WAS REALLY STRONG...

HE KILLED *FIVE* OF THE YOSHIOKA DISCIPLES.

THERE'S NO WAY HE COULD'VE BEATEN DENSHICHIRŌ.

BUT HE'S PROBABLY DEAD NOW.

...

GLUG

GLUG

GLUG

ONCE YOU'RE DEAD, THAT'S IT. THERE'S NOTHING LEFT...

I COULDN'T DO THAT. NO WAY.

I JUST COULDN'T DO THAT...

VERY HONORABLE.

...AN HONORABLE WAY FOR A SWORDSMAN TO GO.

I ADMIRE YOUR GRACE.

FINISH

!!

KOFF

HAK!

KOFF

HUF

HUF

HUF

WHAT'S SO HONORABLE...?

YOU DIE AND THAT'S IT.

I'M NOT GONNA DIE...

I'M HONIDEN MATAHACHI!!

I'M NOT GONNA DIE...

I'M SHINMEN TAKEZO!!

...

SHNORR.

SHNORR.

I HAVE A FUTURE...

I'M STILL ALIVE!

AS LONG AS I'M ALIVE... WHO KNOWS WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN...EVEN TO SOMEONE LIKE ME!!

NNGH.

THMP
THMP

THMP
THMP

FWOM

THMP
THMP

THMP
THMP

NNGH.

HUF

THMP
THMP

HUF

HUF

THMP THMP

YOU! BASTARD...!!

THMP THMP

THMP THMP

NOT DEEP ENOUGH...

BUT HE'S STILL ABLE TO TRADE BLOWS WITH DENSHICHIRO.

HIS TECHNIQUE MIGHT NOT BE PERFECT...

HE MOVED BACK ■ THE NICK OF TIME... OTHERWISE HE'D BE DEAD!!

WHEN I WAS A KID MY FATHER SHINMEN MUNISAI WHIPPED ME INTO SHAPE.

THIS MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...

HE HAS CONSIDERABLE LIFE OR DEATH COMBAT EXPERIENCE...

MIYAMOTO MUSASHI ALSO MUST HAVE GROWN UP WITH A FORMIDABLE OPPONENT.

AND THAT MAN WAS...

DENSHICHIRO YOU DID GROW UP WITH A POWERFUL OPPONENT...

BUT YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE...

...THE ONLY MAN TO EVER DEFEAT MASTER KEMPO, THE FOUNDER OF OUR SCHOOL.

SHINMEN MUNISAI...

SENSEI!

FINISH HIM OFF!!

...

BUT HE'S STILL ALIVE.

ONE MORE BLOW AND HE'S FINISHED.

HE'S POWERLESS NOW.

SENSEI!

THMP THMP

THMP THMP

HUF

THMP THMP

HUF

THMP THMP

HUF

AND HE WILL SACRIFICE HIMSELF IN ORDER TO TAKE DOWN HIS OPPONENT.

DON'T YOU GET IT?

MIYAMOTO'S GOING TO USE WHAT LITTLE STRENGTH HE HAS LEFT FOR ONE LAST STROKE.

HE'S A WOUNDED BEAST...

THMP
THMP

THMP
THMP

THMP
THMP

THMP
THMP

I GAVE EVERYTHING I HAD IN THAT SINGLE STROKE...

IT SHOULD HAVE CUT RIGHT THROUGH HIS BONES.

HUF

HUF

THUMP
THUMP

THUMP
THUMP

IS SAVING
HIS STRENGTH
FOR ONE
FINAL SUICIDE
ATTACK

BUT I
FELT NO
BONE

IF I DON'T
KILL HIM WITH
THE NAIL

KILL HIM
WITH MY
NEXT ONE

THAT IS
IF I CAN
CONTROL

AND NOW
MIYAMOTO
MUSASHI

...CONTINUE TO MOVE MY LEFT ARM...

THMP THMP

THMP THMP

THMP THMP

I'M IMPRESSED WITH YOU, DENSHICHIRO...

...DESPITE THE SERIOUS NATURE OF YOUR INJURY.

YOU MAINTAIN COMPLETE COMPOSURE ...

!!

AND THAT BEAST HAS NOTHING TO LOSE. HE'S GOING TO SACRIFICE HIMSELF...

THAT WAS A SERIOUS BLOW YOU TOOK

TO TAKE YOU DOWN.

MY FEET WON'T MOVE!!

THMP THMP

AND IF THEY'RE GLUED TO THE FLOOR

HUF

HUF

HUF

HUF

HUF

THMP THMP

AM I TOO SCARED TO MOVE?

THMP THMP

THMP THMP

MY HANDS. TOO.

IS THIS FEAR?

THMP THMP

HUF

HUF

HUF

THMP
THMP

AM I AFRAID OF DEATH!?

HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF

THMP
THMP
THMP
THMP
THMP
THMP

HMM...

...

KRAKKL

KRAKKL

!?

KRAKKL

...

WHAT'S GOING ON!?

Vagabond

(STOP CRYING
DENSHICHIRO.)

SHIT
...

HEY...
SHIT
SHIT

HM...
SHIT

#31 | Inferno

WHAT THE HELL!?

RRRRRRRR

FIRE!!

PUT IT OUT!!

...!!

HUF

HUF

HUF

HUF

...!!

HUF

HUF

HUF

...

HUH!?

WHAT!?

HE LEAPT OVER THE WALL!!

I JUST SAW SOMEONE!!

...

I HAVE TO ESCAPE!

HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE

HUF.

HUF.

THEY'LL KILL ME!!

WAKASHIMA AND KAII. GO CHECK THE PREMISES!!

YES SIR!!

THE REST OF YOU PUT OUT THE FIRE!

NIIGASA. TAKE THREE OF OUR MEN AND GO AFTER THAT MAN!!

Y-YES SIR!!

YOUR ACCOMPLICE?

...

...

URK

I APOLOGIZE. I DIDN'T MEAN TO--

FSSH

DAMN IT!!

PUT IT OUT!!

PUT IT OUT!!

KRAKK

BACK DOWN.

KRAKK

KRAKK

YOU MUST GET OUT OF THERE!!

SENSEI !!

UEDA!!

THMP THMP

MIYA-MOTO_

THMP THMP

WE EACH HAVE ONE MORE BLOW...

WE'RE NOT FINISHED YET.

PLIP

HANG ON TO THAT LIFE OF YOURS...

...BECAUSE...

...I WANT TO SEE YOU AGAIN WHEN YOU'RE STRONGER.

THMP THMP

SO...

...YOU'RE GIVING ME A CHANCE...

THMP THMP

YOU'RE GIVING ME TIME.

THMP THMP

TIME IS EQUAL FOR EVERYONE...

...FOR ME AS WELL.

EVENTUALLY...

I VOW TO KILL YOU...

STAY ALIVE UNTIL THEN.

RRRRRRRR

ARRGH! IT'S NO GOOD!!

THE FIRE'S OUT OF CONTROL!!

THIS IS TERRIBLE...!!

GASP.

I GUESS IT'S TRUE.

DAMN IT!!

THERE'S NO WAY WE'LL FIND HIM!!

DAMN!! WHERE IS HE!?

THEY SAY AN ARSONIST ALWAYS RETURNS TO THE SCENE OF HIS CRIME...

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL SIGHT.

THE LEGENDARY YOSHIOKA SCHOOL IS BURNING DOWN.

SHUT UP! YOU WANNA GET KILLED?

IT'S *HIM.*

HE'S STILL ALIVE...!!

WHO'S THAT!?

HE'S ALL CUT UP.

GASP.

HUF

HUF

HUF

HUF

HUF

HUF

YOSHIOKA DENSHICHIRŌ ...

YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ...

YOSHIOKA DENSHICHIRŌ!!

YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ!!

AARRRGH!

THEY'RE SO STRONG!

GULP!

WHAT'S THAT ALL ABOUT?

TAKEZŌ!?

NO!

ARRRGH!

I'M STRONGER.

TAKEZŌ!?

IT CAN'T BE...

NNGH!

HEY!!

WAS THAT HIM!?

TAKEZŌ!!

WHAT'S GOING ON?

A FIGHT.

IT'S A FIGHT!!

YOU BASTARD!!

WHUD

NNGH!

WHUD

FIRST A FIRE AND NOW A FIGHT!!

YEAH! GET HIM!!

YOU'RE STILL ALIVE!?

WAS THAT YOU, TAKEZO!?

TAKEZO!!

HUF

HUF

HUF

HUF

HUF

HUF

HUF

Glossary and Extraneous Background Information

The Sengoku Period and the Battle of Sekigahara
The Warring States or *Sengoku* period(1482-1558) in Japan was a time of chaos and conflict. Central authorities, in the form of the imperial court and the shogunate, had grown increasingly weaker and the land was effectively ruled autonomously by numerous *daimyo*(domainal lords). Looking to expand their spheres of control, the *daimyo* were constantly at war with each other. One *daimyo* in particular, Oda Nobunaga, set out on a mission to unify Japan by means of conquest. Incredibly successful, by the time of his assassination in 1582, he managed to control approximately one-third of all of Japan. One of Nobunaga's chief generals, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, became Nobunaga's successor to carry on the quest for unification. Through a process of conquest and conciliation, Hideyoshi succeeded in creating an orderly federation amongst the *daimyo* and by 1590, order was restored to Japan under Hideyoshi's rule. Hideyoshi's death in 1598, however, presented the question of succession. Most of the *daimyo* from the domains in the west remained loyal to the Toyotomi Clan and its five-year-old heir, Toyotomi Hideyori. Tokugawa Ieyasu, however, leading the major *daimyo* from central and eastern Japan, challenged the Toyotomi clan's leadership. The two sides clashed at the Battle of Sekigahara(1600) in Mino (located in present day Gifu Prefecture) where the Tokugawa claimed an overwhelming victory. From that point on, the Tokugawa clan would effectively rule Japan for the next 250 years.

Takuan Soho (1573-1645)
A monk of the Rinzai sect of Zen Buddhism, by the time Takuan was 37, he was appointed abbot of the leading temple of the Rinzai sect, Daitokuji. Takuan was an important figure whose acute and brutally honest advice was sought by influential and powerful figures such as Emperor Go Mizuno and the shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu. His correspondence to Yagyu Munenori discussing Zen and swordsmanship entitled ***The Unfettered Mind*** has become an influential treatise in both the areas of philosophy and martial arts. The pickled daikon radish, *takuan*, also bears his name.

The Yagyu Clan
Yagyu Muneyoshi Sekishusai (1527-1606) was the founder
of the famed Yagyu-Shinkage school of sword fighting. His son Yagyu Munenon (1571-1646) was one of Tokugawa's key general's at the Battle of Sekigahara. Munenori was appointed as the official fencing instructor of the Tokugawa Clan and in 1632 the Yagyu were appointed as the *ometsuke*– responsible for the surveillance of the daimyo. Although the Yagyu clan has been depicted ■ Kazuo Koike's ***Lone Wolf and Cub*** as the plotters of the downfall of Itto Ogami, the general Japanese popular culture take on the Yagyu Clan is more positive. More specifically, Munenori's son, Yagyu Jubei (1607-1650), is viewed as a wandering hero protecting the people from evil-doers.

Yoshioka Kempo (dates unknown)
A distinguished warrior during the *Sengoku* period (1482-1558) and the founder of the renowned Yoshioka school of sword fighting. Yoshioka Kempo mastered the Kyohachi style of swordmanship and then modified it to form the Yoshioka style. In the context of Inoue's ***Vagabond*** as well as in Yoshikawa's ***Musashi***, Yoshioka Seijuro and Denshichiro are Kempo's sons who are historically thought to have dueled with Miyamoto Musashi on numerous occasions.

About *Vagabond* and *Miyamoto Musashi*

Takehiko Inoue's ***Vagabond***, based on Eiji Yoshikawa's novel ***Musashi***, is a fictional account of the life of Miyamoto Musashi (1584-1645). The historical figure Miyamoto Musashi, author of the philosophical strategy guide ***A Book of Five Rings***, was a master of the sword and was revered as a "sword-saint." He founded the Niten Ichi style of sword fighting which is typified by fighting with both long and short swords at once, holding the long sword with the right hand and the short sword with the left. Musashi was also a master of the "gentler arts"—he was a master of *sumi-e* (black ink drawings), metalworking, and woodcarving. The films, ***The Samurai Trilogy***, directed by Hiroshi Inagaki and starring Toshiro Mifune were also based on Yoshikawa's ***Musashi***.

About the Author

Vagabond was created by Takehiko Inoue, author of the best selling manga ***Slam Dunk***, with over 100 million copies in print worldwide. For his work on ***Vagabond***, Inoue received the 2000 Media Arts award for Manga from the Japanese Ministry of Culture as well as the 2000 Kodansha Award for best manga. Most recently in 2002, Inoue received the prestigious Tezuka award for best manga. To date, ***Vagabond*** has sold well over 22 million copies throughout the world. In addition to his numerous manga titles, Inoue also created the character designs for the PlayStation basketball game, ***One on One***.

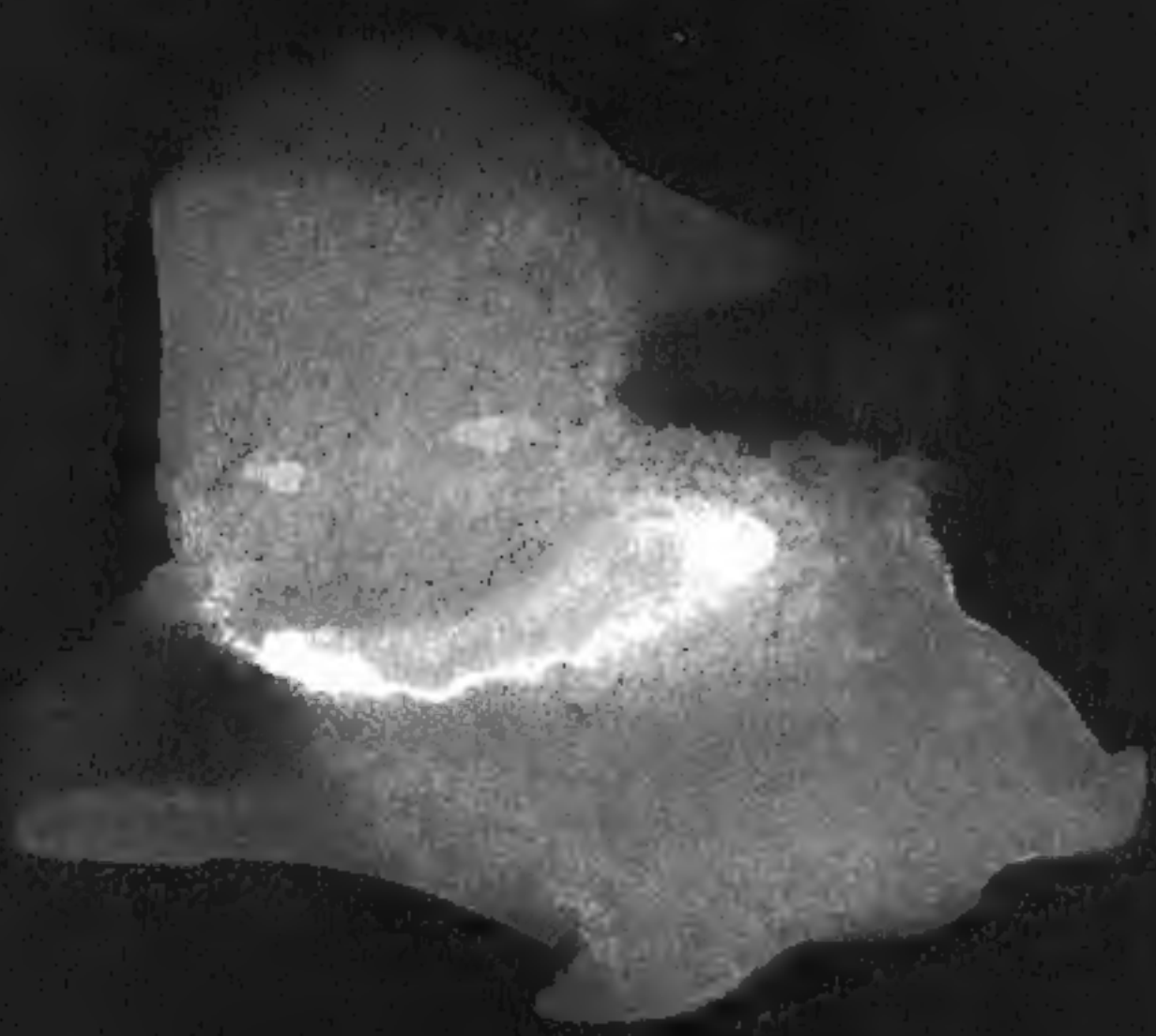
This is the LAST page of this comic!

Vagabond has been printed to read from **right** to **left** in its original Japanese format—presenting Takehiko Inoue's dynamic artwork the way it was meant to be seen!

When most Japanese comics are published in English, a mirror image of the original artwork is printed in order to accommodate the left to right reading orientation of English. For this reason, errors in continuity occasionally occur and characters who were originally right-handed suddenly become left-handed. In order to present manga in its purest form, ***Vagabond*** is being printed to read from right to left. This way, kimono are worn with the left side over the right and the samurai's long and short swords are carried on the **left** side, the way they were traditionally worn.

To properly enjoy ***Vagabond***, start from the other end of this comic and read from right to left.

A note on names: The names presented within the context of this comic are presented in the traditional Japanese order—surname, followed by first name. "Miyamoto" is Miyamoto Musashi's last name and "Musashi" is his first name. The name of the creator of ***Vagabond***, however, has been presented first name first, last name second. "Takehiko" is the author's first name and "Inoue" is his last name.



It is a masterwork in story and art. In no time you are drawn into the characters, first by the skillful art and then by the story. I found Takehiko's art most appealing and his storytelling ability superb.
–David LeBlanc, *Comic Book Net Electronic Magazine*

Shinmen Takezo is a young man who is destined to become the legendary sword-saint, Miyamoto Musashi–perhaps one of the most renowned samurai of all time. For now, Takezo is a cold-hearted killer, who will take on anyone in mortal combat to make a name for himself. This is the journey of a wild young brute who strives to reach enlightenment by way of the sword–fighting to the brink of death.

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